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Culture of peace

Letter dated 20 November 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the Perth Declaration adopted by the Fifth Regional Interfaith Dialogue on 30 October 2009 (see annex). The Regional Interfaith Dialogue, co-sponsored by Indonesia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Australia, brought together 146 participants from 14 countries to discuss "Future faith leaders: regional challenges and cooperation".

I kindly request that this letter and the Perth Declaration of the Fifth Regional Interfaith Dialogue be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 49.

(*Signed*) Gary **Quinlan**
Permanent Representative

09-61935 (E) 251109

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Annex to the letter dated 20 November 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Fifth Regional Interfaith Dialogue: "Future faith leaders: regional challenges and cooperation"

Perth Declaration

Participants from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam are gathered in Perth for the 2009 Regional Interfaith Dialogue on "Future faith leaders: regional challenges and cooperation".

Considerable progress has been made in the economic and political integration of our region. Religious diversity is a national asset that creates and enhances multilateral relations between our nations. This Dialogue has focused on the next generation of faith leaders who will develop a network linking communities around the region for ongoing interfaith activities.

We thank the Government of Australia for hosting the Fifth Regional Interfaith Dialogue. We also express our appreciation to the co-sponsors — Indonesia, New Zealand and the Philippines — for their continuing commitment and contribution to the Dialogue process.

While the Interfaith Dialogues are important for the opportunity they provide to establish contacts and engage in discussions, we recognize that their true value is measured by the success with which our words are translated into action. As delegates of this Dialogue, we undertake to take messages of peace and understanding to our respective communities and to work together with those from our own faiths and with others to implement these proposals.

No declaration can capture the range of partnerships and relationships between faiths and across the region that have been created at this event. The full value of the Dialogue will be realized by the implementation of the following recommendations.

We unanimously make the following recommendations for action:

1. We call upon our respective Governments to continue their support for this Regional Interfaith Dialogue.

2. We commit to the establishment of an interfaith social network facility with an online forum, which integrates existing networks.

3. We commit to fostering regional project-driven activities across faith communities that focus on community service and development, environmental challenges and social justice.

4. We call upon Governments and faith communities to invest in the development of future interfaith leaders.

5. We commit to supporting the development of resources for teaching youth about other faiths that are acceptable to the relevant religious communities and to educators.

6. We note the importance of, and commit to, the collection and dissemination of best practice educational interfaith resources and activities in the region.

7. We encourage faith communities to meet the needs of marginalized youth as a response to the dangers of radicalization.

8. We call for government and community support for faith leaders to be trained in mediation for peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

9. We call upon Governments and faith communities to promote the traditions of peacemaking and conflict resolution found within the different faith and indigenous traditions.

10. We call upon government and civil society, including faith-based groups, to strengthen collaboration in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

11. We acknowledge the value of the freedom of the media in the promotion of communal and regional harmony, and we call on religious leaders and national and international media to recognize that this right entails the responsibility for accurate and balanced reporting.

12. We call on faith communities to seek media training and for media outlets to train reporters in religious issues.

13. We call on media and religious leaders to take responsibility for the resolution of disputes over misrepresentations and other conflicts.

14. We encourage delegations at future Dialogues to reflect gender and other diversity.

Participating countries will report back on the implementation of these recommendations at the Sixth Regional Interfaith Dialogue.

30 October 2009